



# AYYAPPAN

THE LORD OF SHABARIMALA

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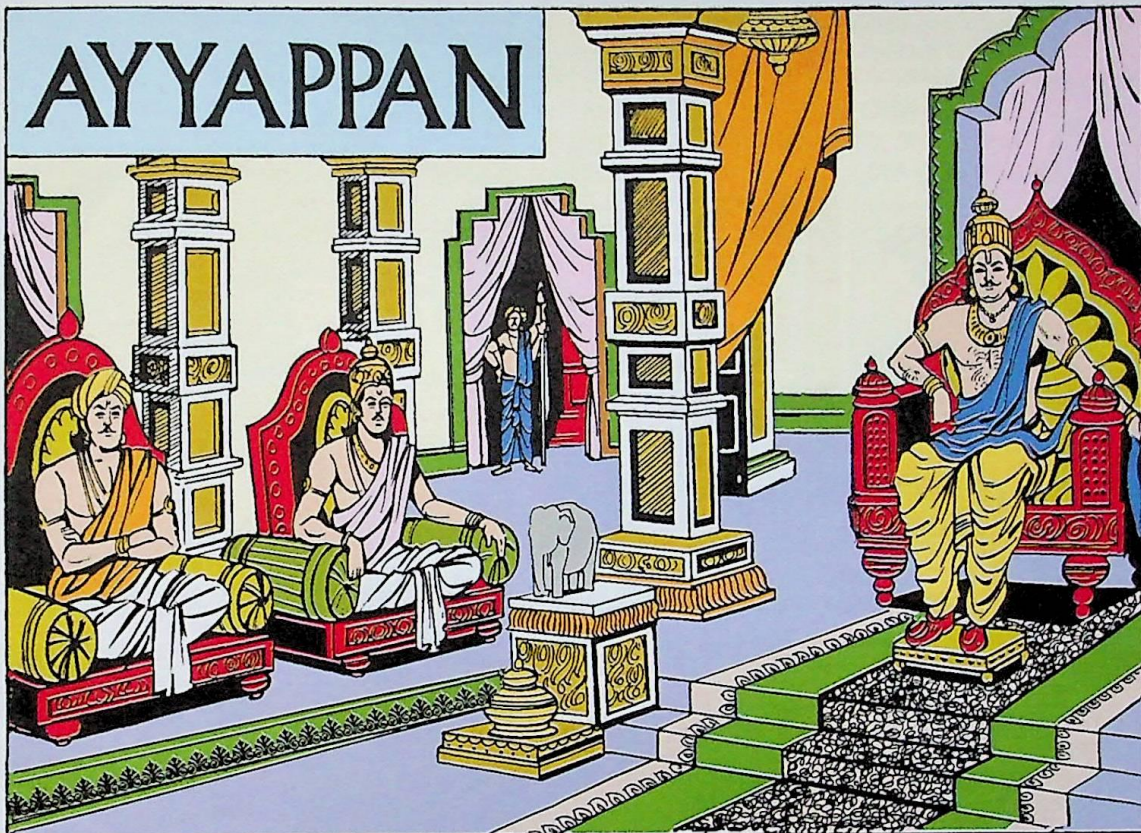
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# AYYAPPAN



KING RAJASHEKHARA, THE WEALTHY RULER OF PANTHALAM, IN KERALA, HAD NO CHILDREN.

HIS SUBJECTS WERE WORRIED.

IF THERE IS NO HEIR TO THE THRONE, WHAT WILL BECOME OF US WHEN OUR KING DIES?

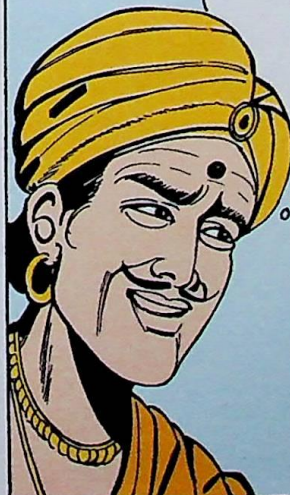
O THAT HE WERE BLESSED WITH A SON.

YES, A SON AS PIOUS AND GENEROUS AS HE IS!



HIS AMBITIOUS DIWAN, HOWEVER, WAS HAPPY.

AS LONG AS THERE IS NO HEIR TO THE THRONE, WHEN RAJASHEKHARA DIES HIS KINGDOM WILL CERTAINLY BE MINE.





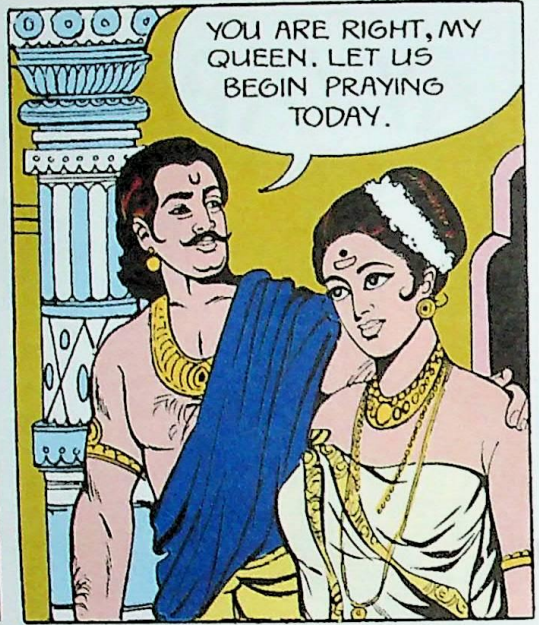
ONE DAY AS RAJASHEKHARA AND HIS QUEEN SAT TALKING -

ALAS ! WHO WILL RULE THE KINGDOM AFTER ME ?

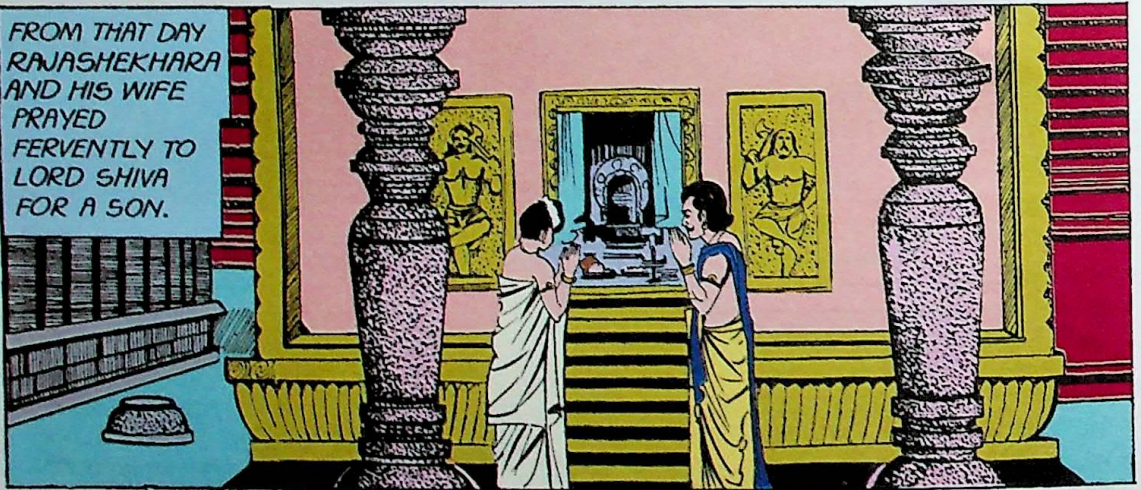
LET US PRAY TO LORD SHIVA FOR A SON. I AM SURE HE WILL BLESS US WITH ONE.



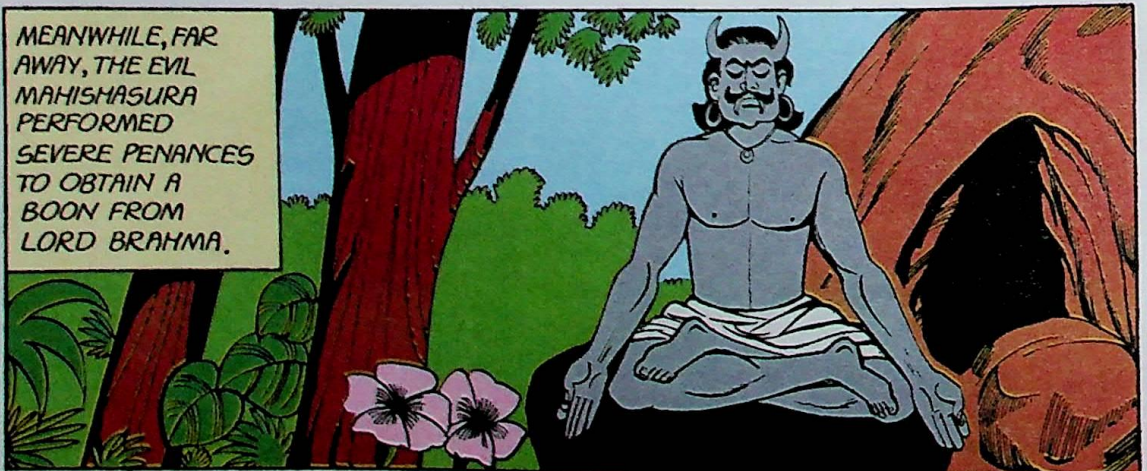
YOU ARE RIGHT, MY QUEEN. LET US BEGIN PRAYING TODAY.



FROM THAT DAY RAJASHEKHARA AND HIS WIFE PRAYED FERVENTLY TO LORD SHIVA FOR A SON.

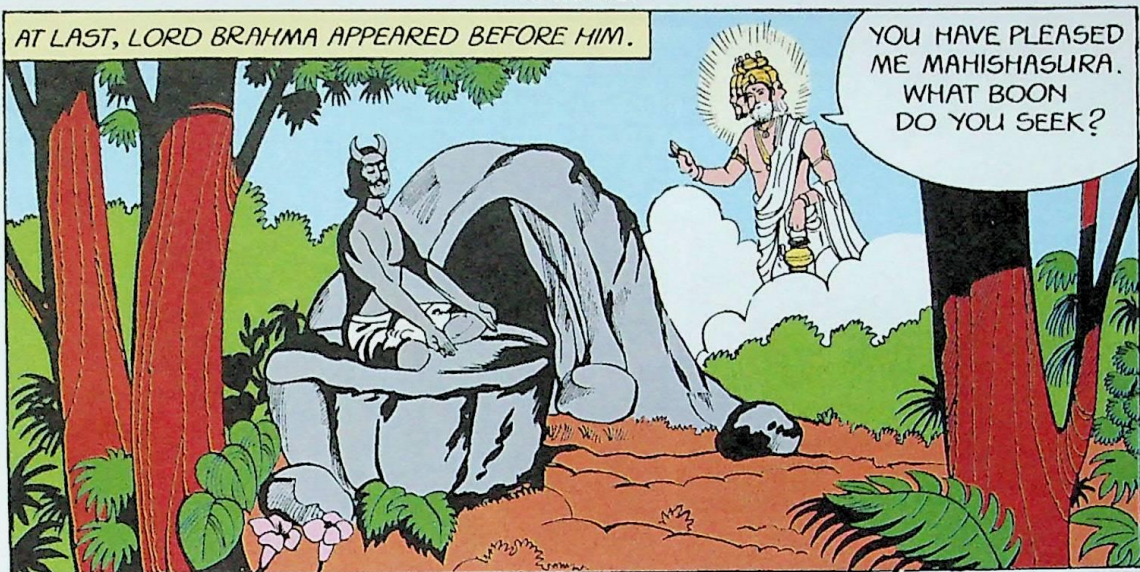


MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY, THE EVIL MAHISHASURA PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO OBTAIN A BOON FROM LORD BRAHMA.





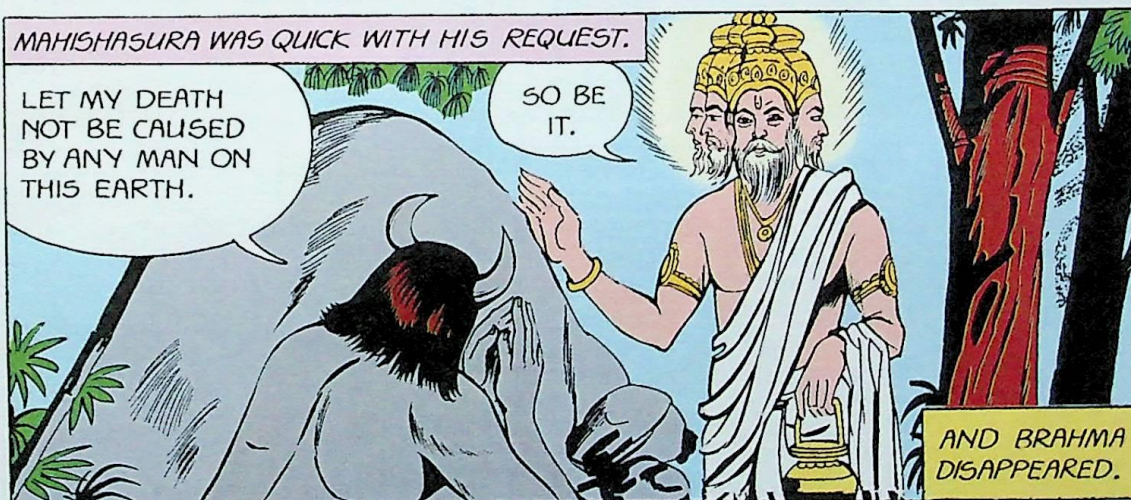
AT LAST, LORD BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



MAHISHASURA WAS QUICK WITH HIS REQUEST.

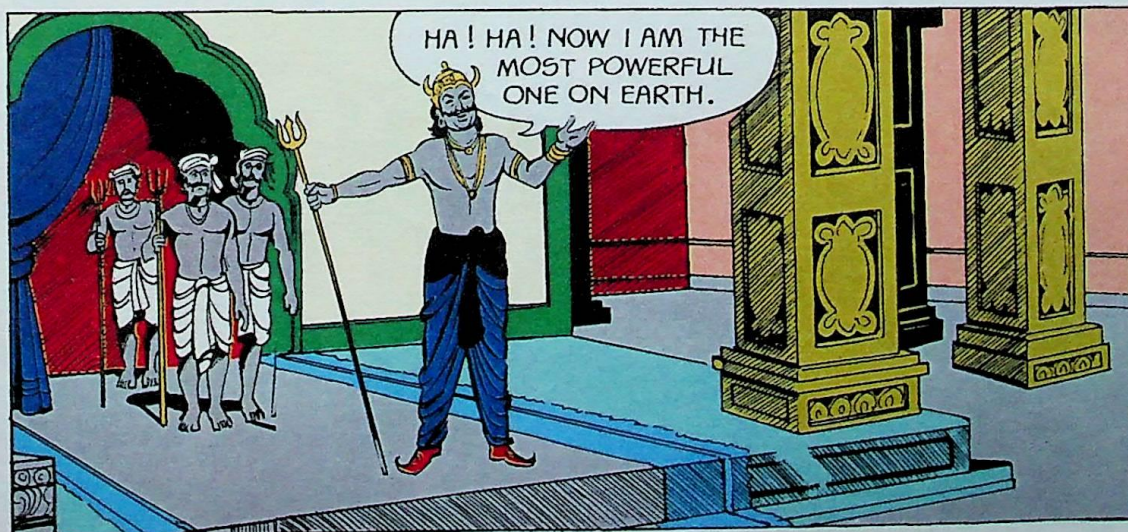
LET MY DEATH NOT BE CAUSED BY ANY MAN ON THIS EARTH.

SO BE IT.



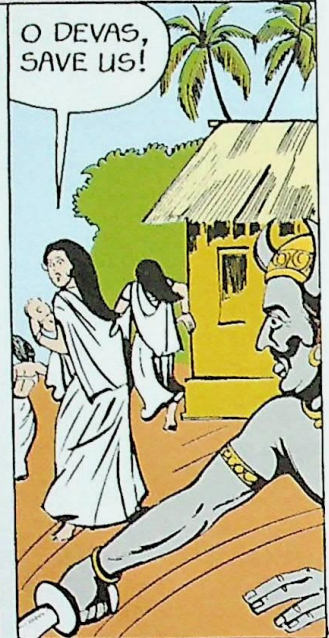
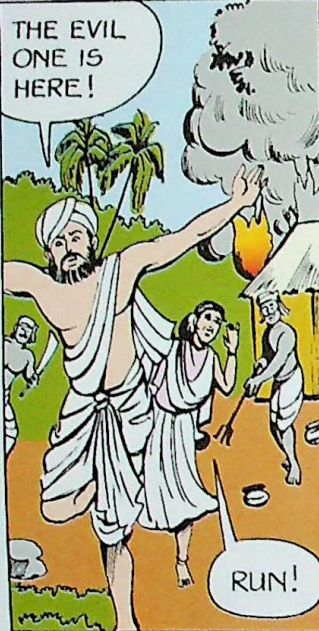
AND BRAHMA DISAPPEARED.

HA! HA! NOW I AM THE MOST POWERFUL ONE ON EARTH.





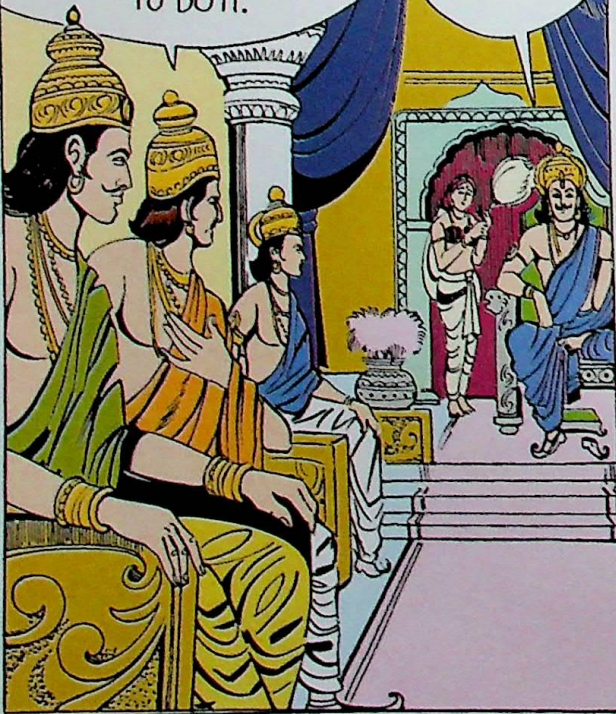
EMBOLDENED BY THE BOON, MAHISHASURA BEGAN HARASSING ALL ON EARTH.



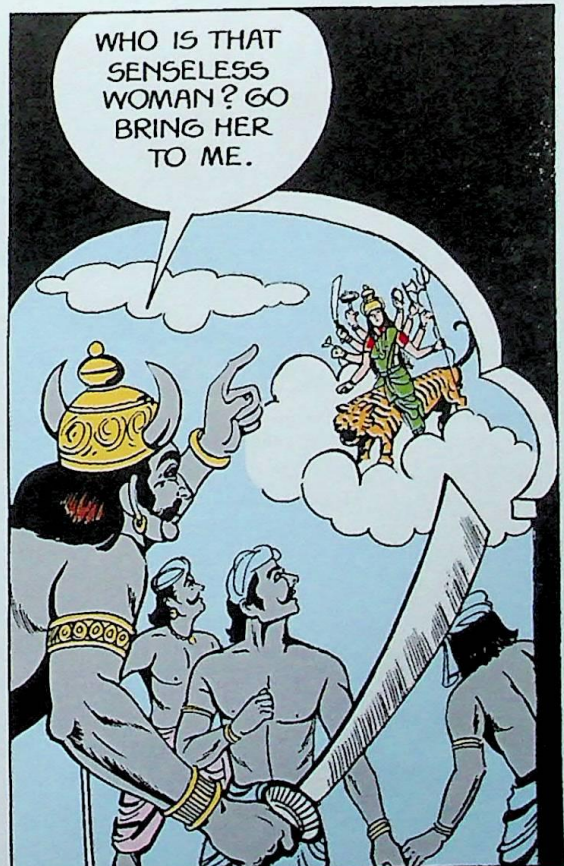
THE DEVAS HELD COUNCIL.

THIS ASURA MUST BE DESTROYED. BECAUSE OF BRAHMA'S BOON, ONLY A WOMAN WOULD BE ABLE TO DO IT.

THEN LET US EVOKE ONE WITH OUR COMBINED POWERS.









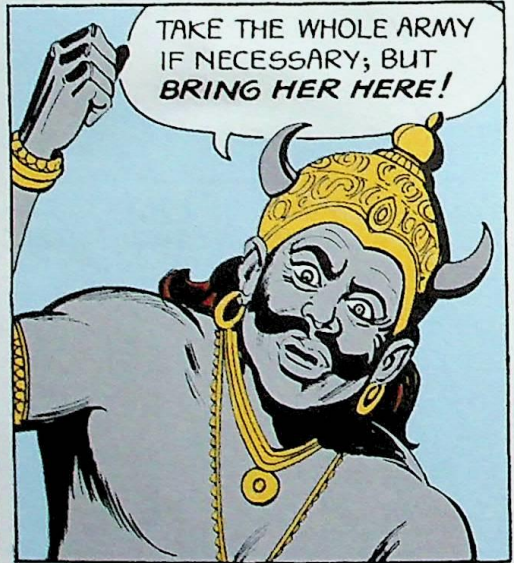
BUT CHANDIKA DEVI VANQUISHED THEM IN NO TIME.



THEY RETURNED TO MAHISHASURA.



TAKE THE WHOLE ARMY  
IF NECESSARY; BUT  
**BRING HER HERE!**



HOWEVER, THE ARMY WAS NO  
MATCH EITHER FOR CHANDIKA  
DEVI. IT WAS SOON  
ROUTED.





MAHISHASURA WAS MAD WITH ANGER. HE APPROACHED CHANDIKA DEVI FIERCELY...

THAT WOMAN HAS GONE TOO FAR. I SHALL DESTROY HER.



BUT HE, TOO, WAS NO MATCH FOR HER AND WAS SOON SLAIN.



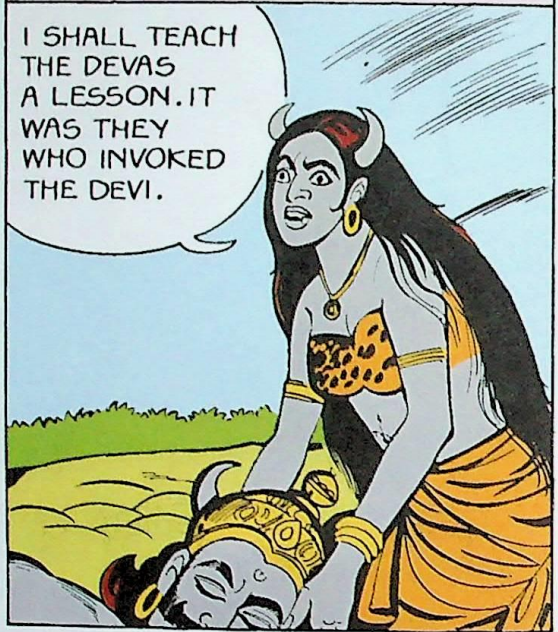


HER MISSION ACCOMPLISHED,  
CHANDIKA DEVI ASCENDED TO HEAVEN.



WHEN MAHISHI, THE WIFE OF  
MAHISHASURA, LEARNT OF HER  
HUSBAND'S DEATH—

I SHALL TEACH  
THE DEVAS  
A LESSON. IT  
WAS THEY  
WHO INVOKED  
THE DEVI.



MAHISHI UNDERTOOK A DEEP PENANCE  
TO PROPITIATE LORD BRAHMA. HE  
APPEARED BEFORE HER.



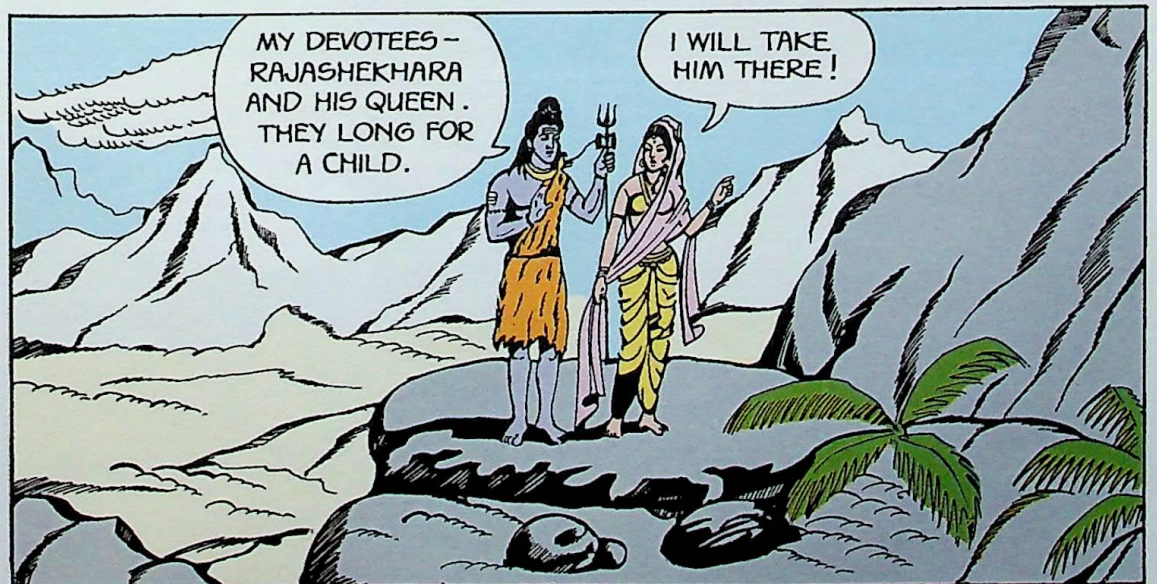
MAHISHI! WHAT  
DO YOU  
DESIRE?

THAT I SHOULD  
NOT MEET MY  
DEATH AT THE  
HANDS OF EITHER  
VISHNU OR SHIVA!

BRAHMA GRANTED HER THE  
BOON AND VANISHED.







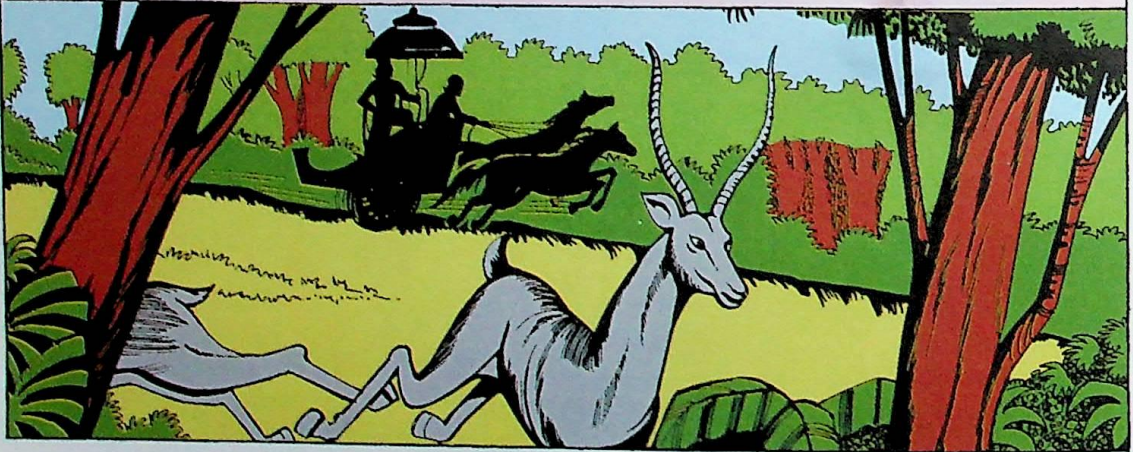


AS SOON AS THE INFANT WAS CREATED -

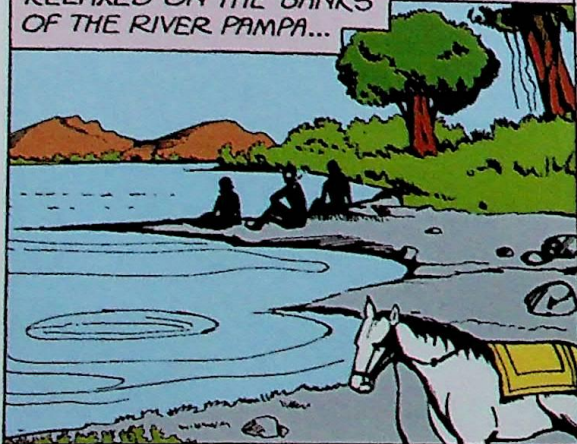
I WILL TIE THIS GOLD BELL AROUND HIS NECK BEFORE I TAKE HIM TO EARTH.



MEANWHILE, ON EARTH, RAJASHEKHARA WAS OUT HUNTING WITH HIS RETINUE.

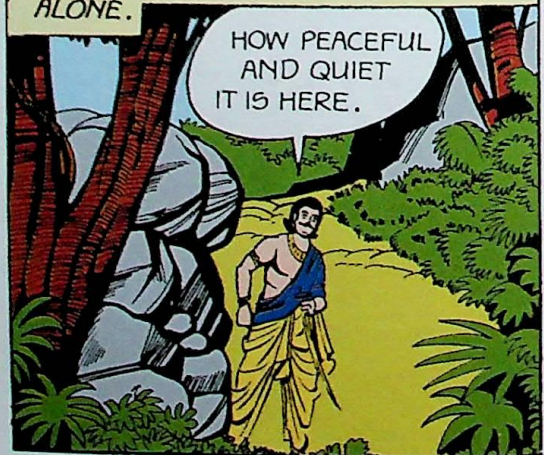


AFTER A TIRING DAY WHILE THE PARTY RELAXED ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER PAMPA...



...RAJASHEKHARA WANDERED OFF ALONE.

HOW PEACEFUL AND QUIET IT IS HERE.





AYYAPPAN

SUDDENLY HE HEARD A FEEBLE WAIL.

WAH! WAH! WAH!

A BABY'S  
CRY? HERE?

RAVASHEKHARA WALKED IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE SOUND CAME.

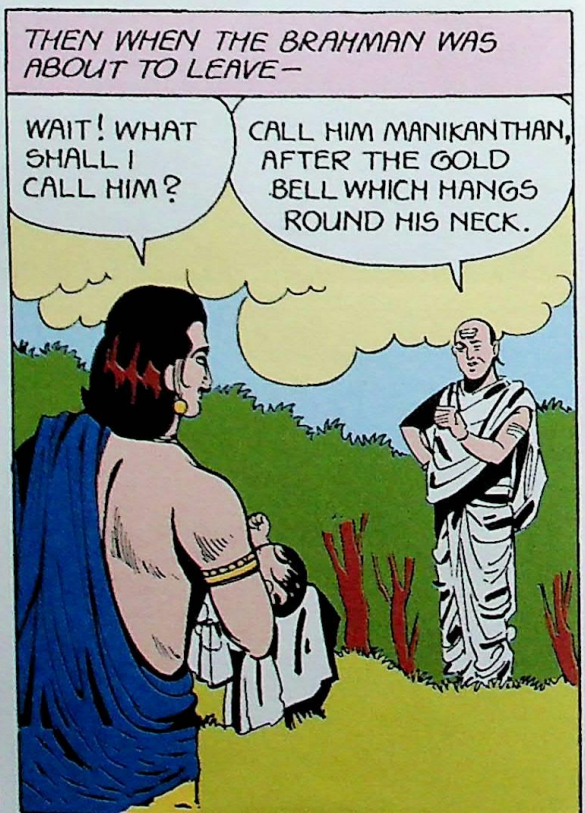
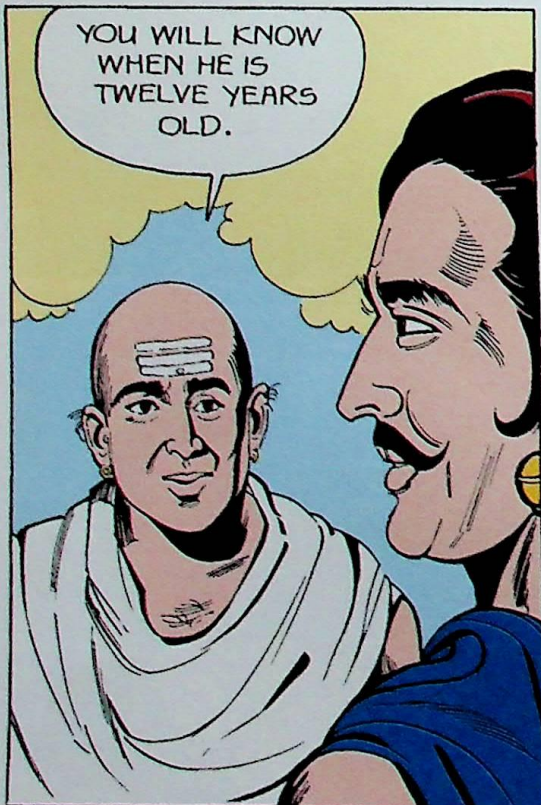
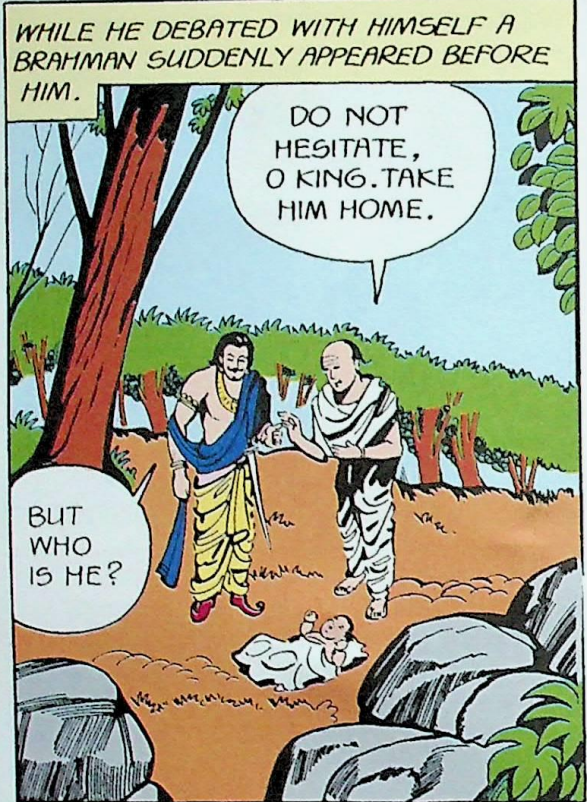
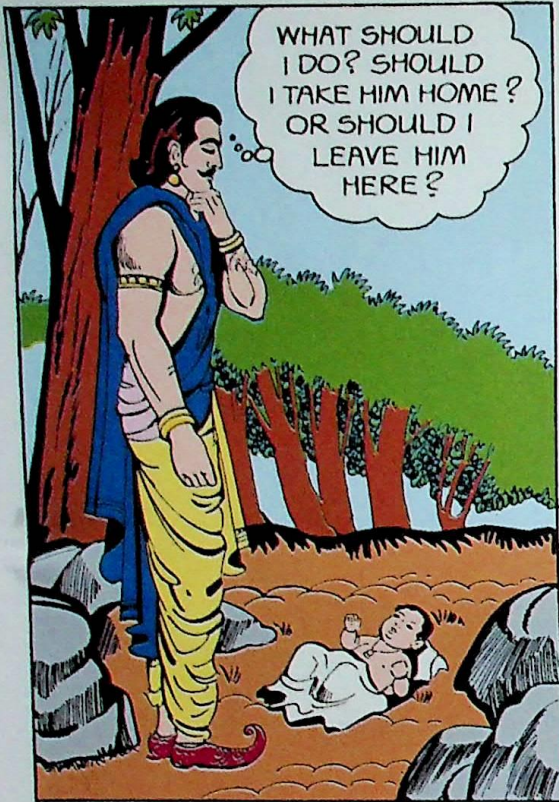
HE SAW A HELPLESS BABY LYING ALL  
ALONE ON  
A ROCK.

POOR BABY!  
DON'T CRY!

HE LOOKED AROUND.

NOT A SOUL  
IN SIGHT. TO  
WHOM COULD  
IT BELONG?







RAJASHEKHARA TOOK MANIKANTHAN HOME TO HIS QUEEN.

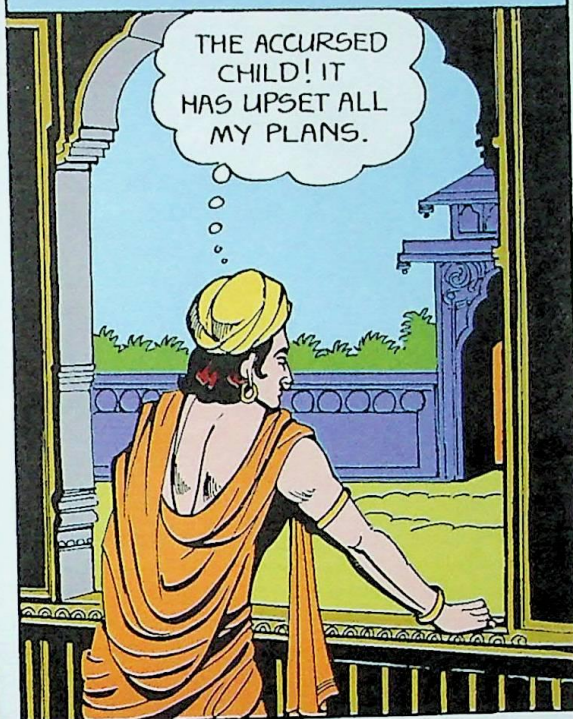
A CHILD AT LAST!  
HOW HAPPY  
I AM.

HE IS  
GOD'S  
OWN  
GIFT.

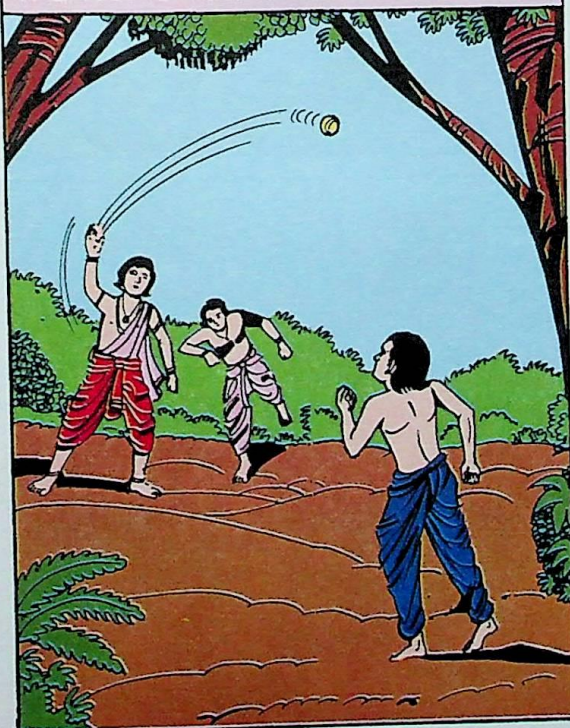


BUT RAJASHEKHARA'S DIWAN DIDN'T THINK SO.

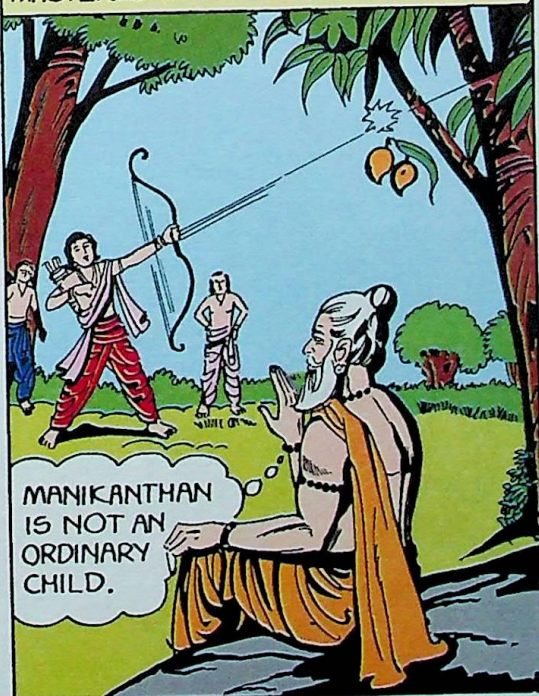
THE ACCURSED  
CHILD! IT  
HAS UPSET ALL  
MY PLANS.



MANIKANTHAN SOON GREW UP INTO  
A STRONG YOUNG LAD.



HE WAS PLACED UNDER THE GUIDANCE  
OF AN EXCELLENT GURU AND SOON  
MASTERED ALL THERE WAS TO LEARN.

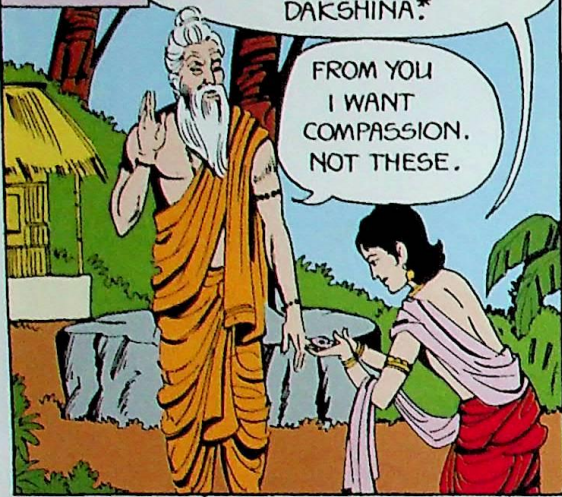




BY THE TIME MANIKANTHAN'S STUDIES WERE OVER, THE GURU KNEW THAT HE WAS A DIVINE CHILD.

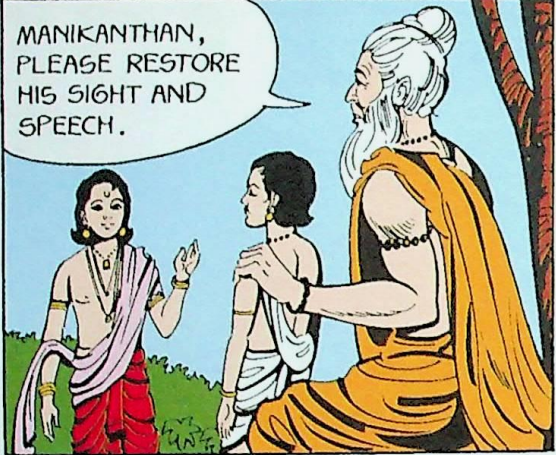
SIR, PLEASE ACCEPT MY GURU-DAKSHINA\*.

FROM YOU I WANT COMPASSION. NOT THESE.



THEN THE GURU BROUGHT HIS BLIND AND MUTE SON BEFORE MANIKANTHAN.

MANIKANTHAN, PLEASE RESTORE HIS SIGHT AND SPEECH.



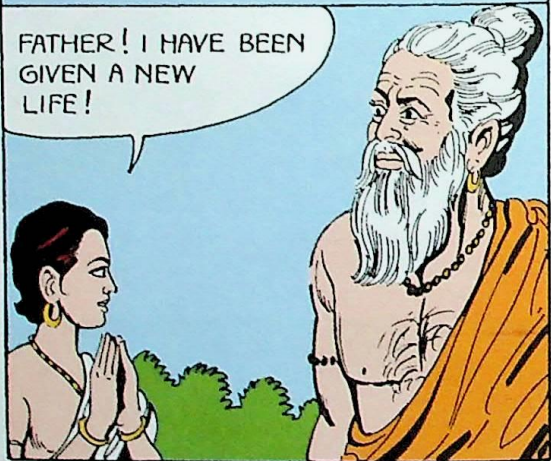
MANIKANTHAN BLESSED THE BOY.

THEY ARE HIS.



THE GURU'S SON SAW LIGHT.

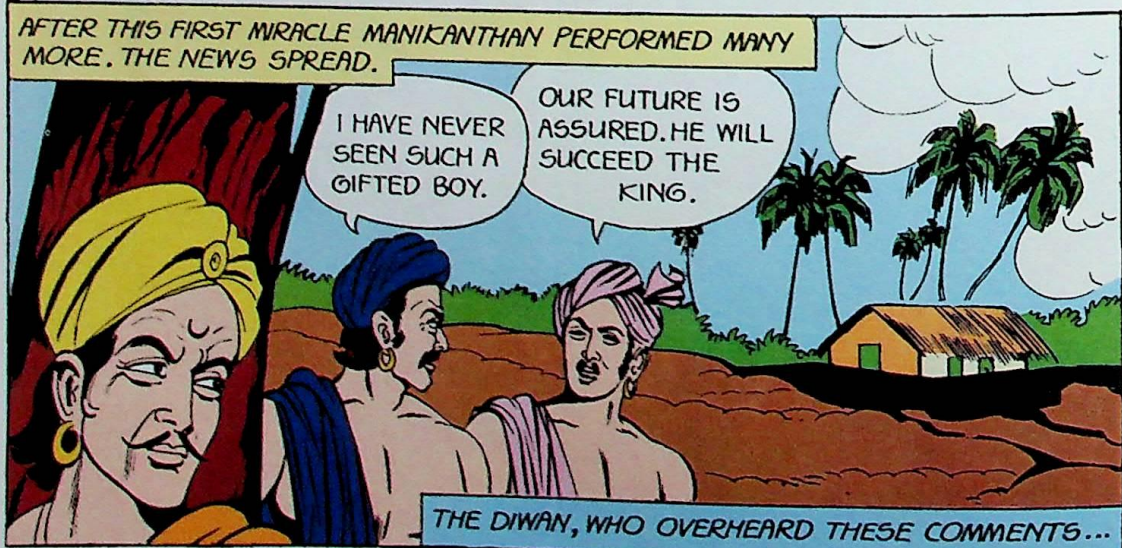
FATHER! I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A NEW LIFE!



AFTER THIS FIRST MIRACLE MANIKANTHAN PERFORMED MANY MORE. THE NEWS SPREAD.

I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A GIFTED BOY.

OUR FUTURE IS ASSURED. HE WILL SUCCEED THE KING.



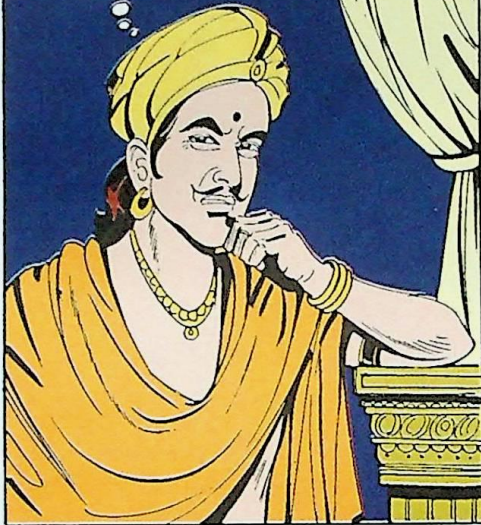
THE DIWAN, WHO OVERHEARD THESE COMMENTS...

\*THE TRADITIONAL TRIBUTE GIVEN BY A DISCIPLE TO HIS TEACHER



...GOT REALLY WORRIED.

I MUST GET  
RID OF THE  
BOY SOME-  
HOW.



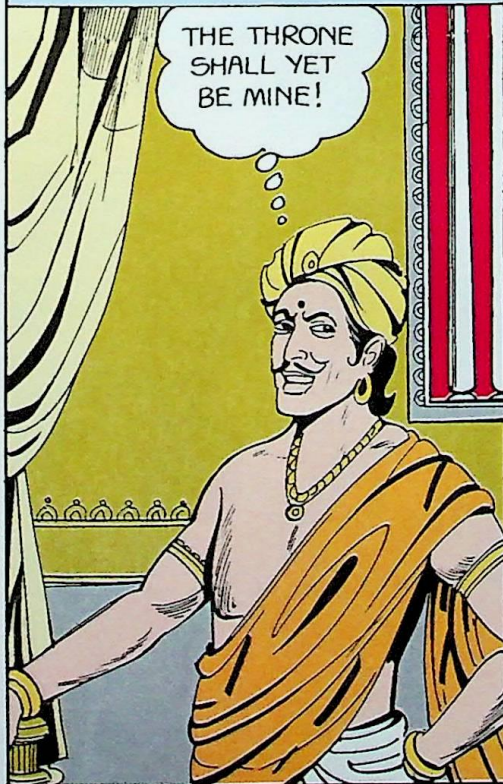
AND THEN THE UNFORESEEN HAPPENED.  
THE QUEEN GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.

ALAS ! WHY WERE  
YOU NOT BORN  
EARLIER ? NOW YOU  
WILL NEVER  
BECOME KING.  
UNLESS...



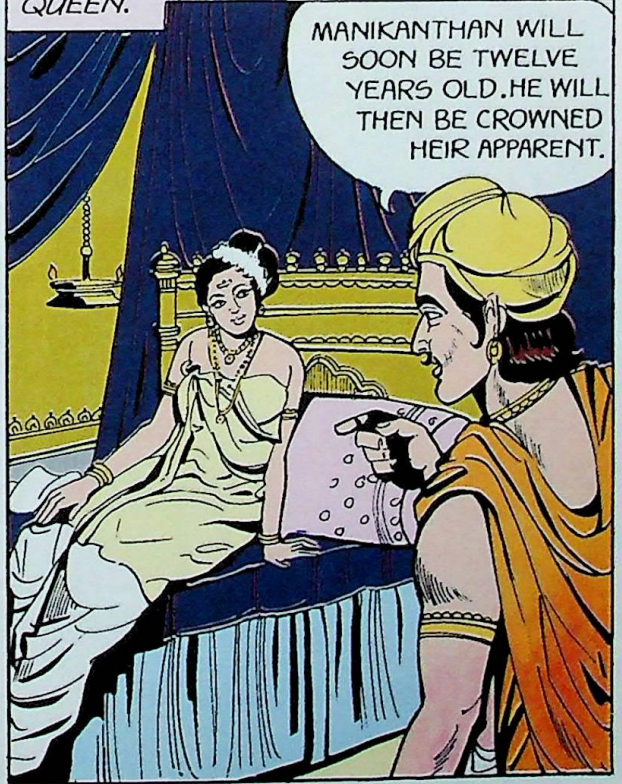
THE DIWAN WAS JUBILANT.

THE THRONE  
SHALL YET  
BE MINE !

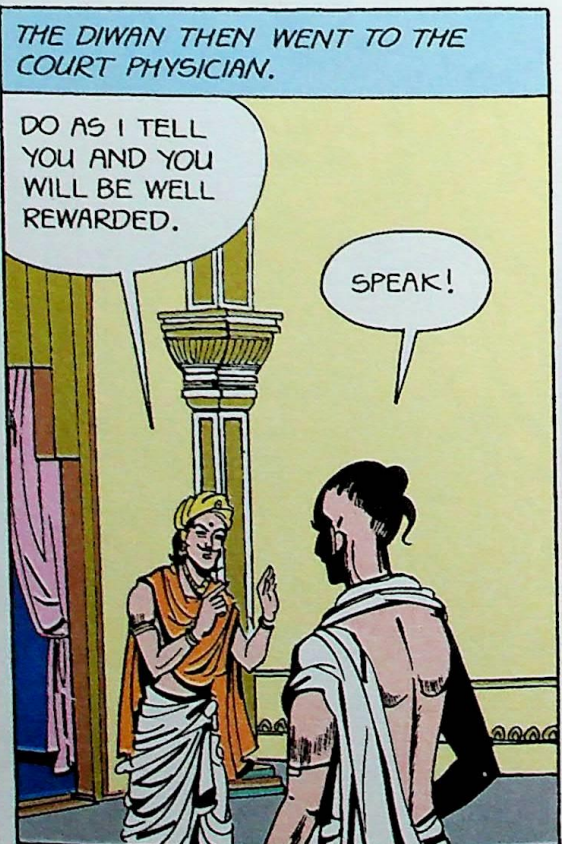
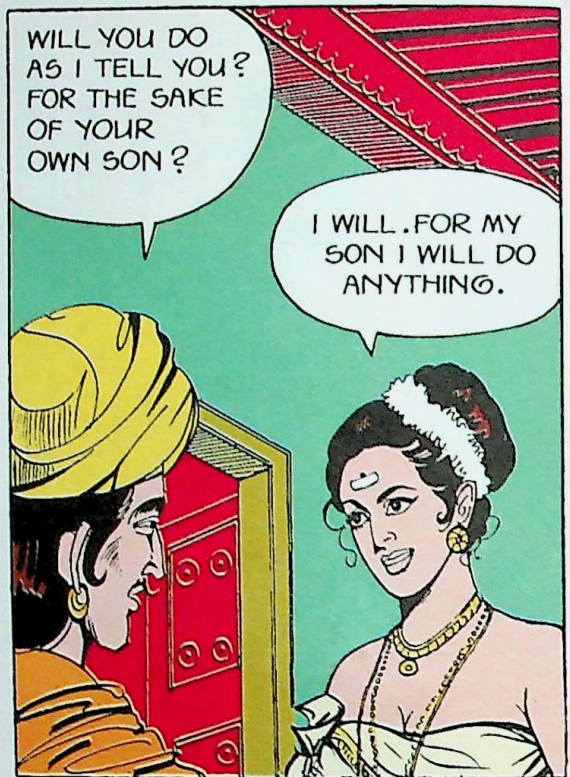
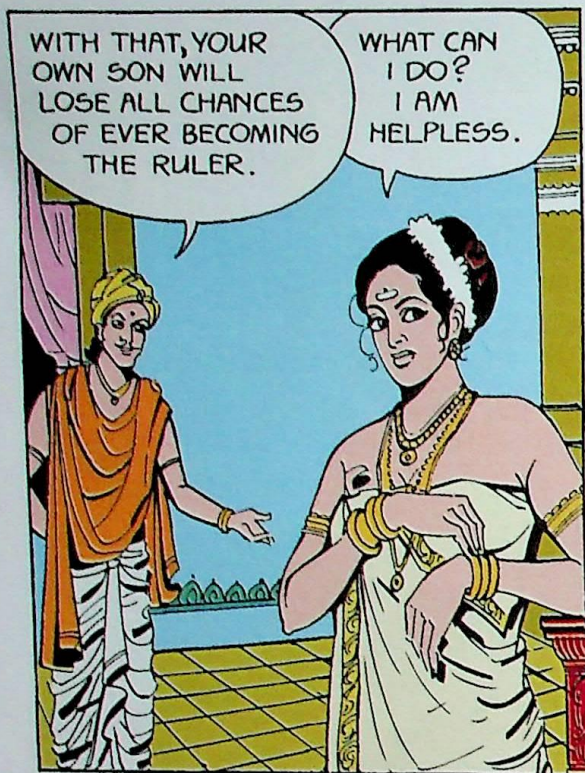


A FEW DAYS LATER HE WENT TO THE  
QUEEN.

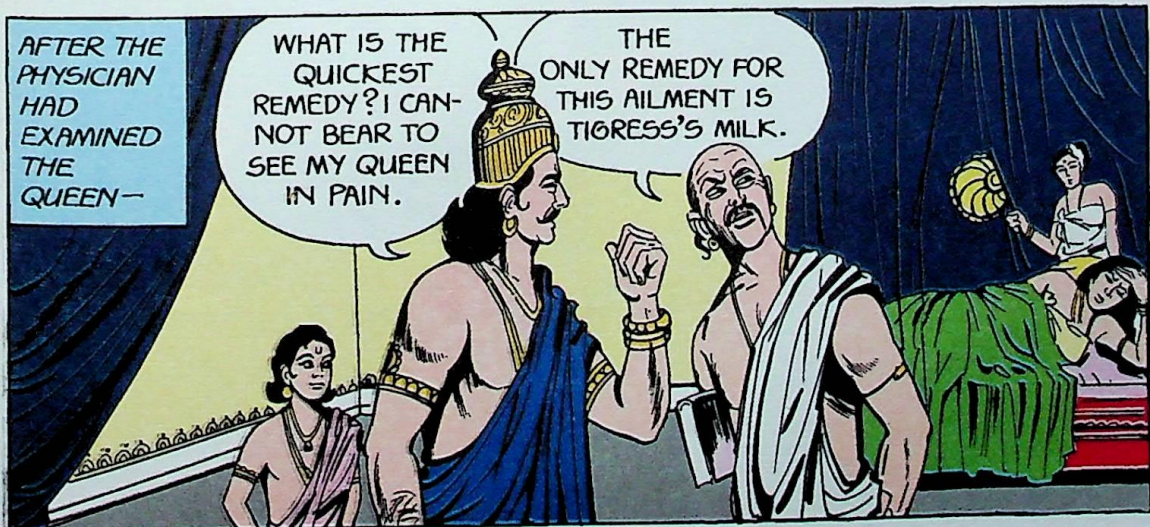
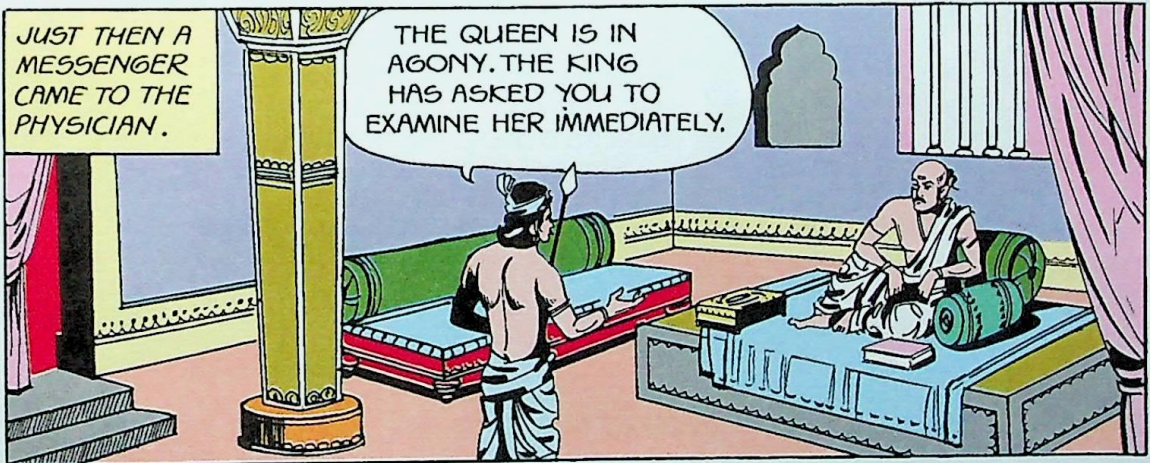
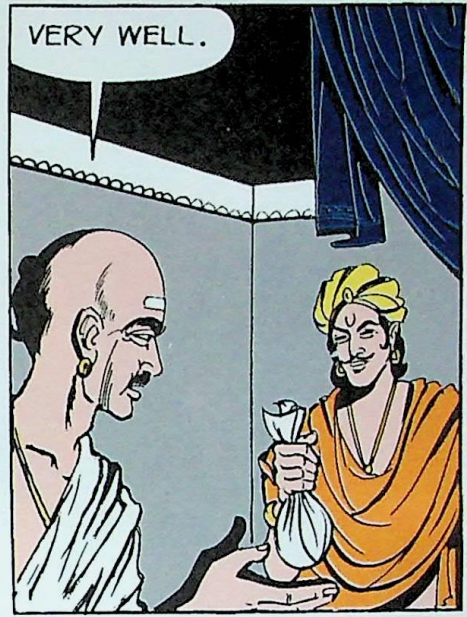
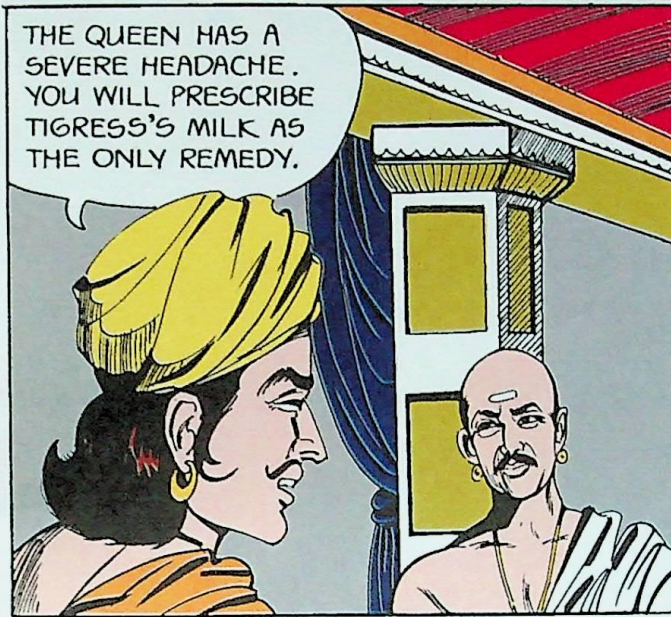
MANIKANTHAN WILL  
SOON BE TWELVE  
YEARS OLD. HE WILL  
THEN BE CROWNED  
HEIR APPARENT.













THE KING WAS AGHAST.

TIGRESS'S MILK?  
BUT HOW ARE  
WE TO GET IT?

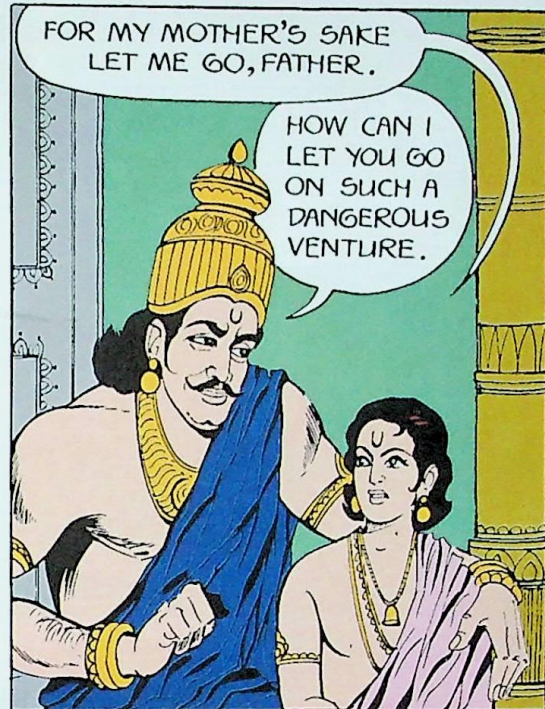
THE KING THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE AND  
THEN SENT FOR HIS DIWAN.

SEND AS MANY MEN AS POSSIBLE  
INTO THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF  
TIGRESS'S MILK. THE ONE WHO  
BRINGS IT SHALL  
HAVE HALF MY  
KINGDOM.

MANY MEN WENT BUT ALL RETURNED—  
UNSUCCESSFUL.

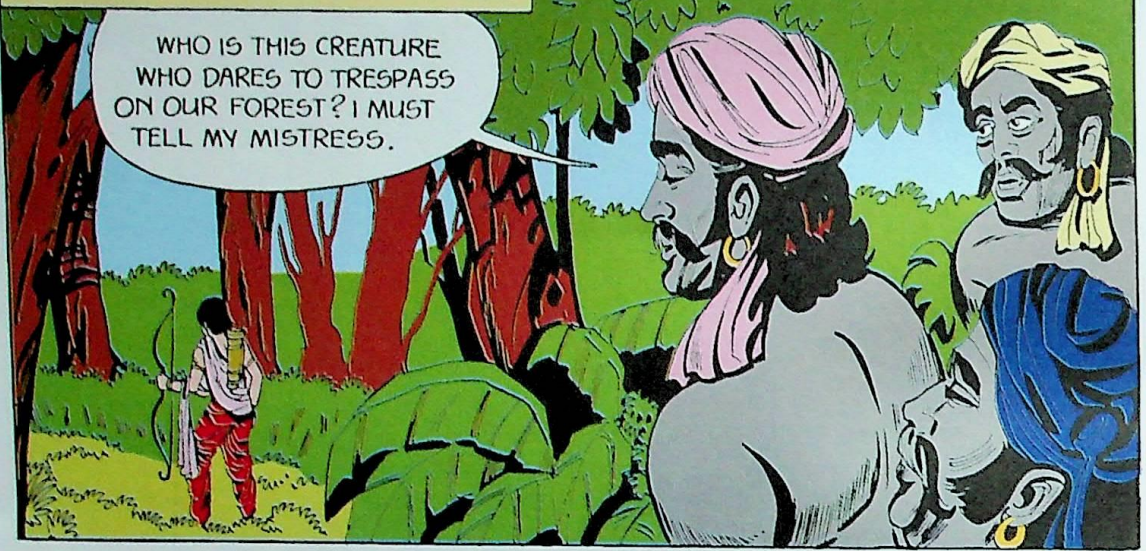
WE SAW A  
NUMBER OF  
TIGERS. BUT...







AS HE WANDERED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO IT HE CAME TO THE DOMAIN OF MAHISHI, WHO LIVED IN THAT FOREST.

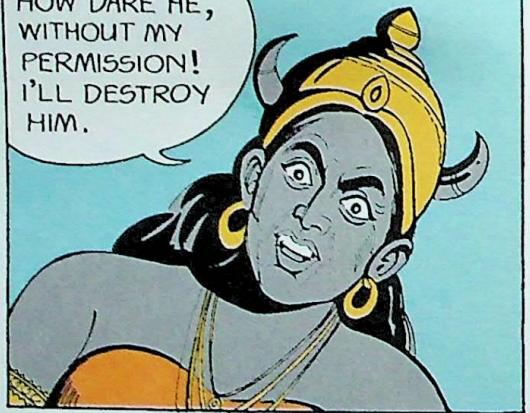


THE ASURA RAN TO MAHISHI.

THERE IS A BOY ROAMING IN OUR FORESTS.



HOW DARE HE, WITHOUT MY PERMISSION! I'LL DESTROY HIM.

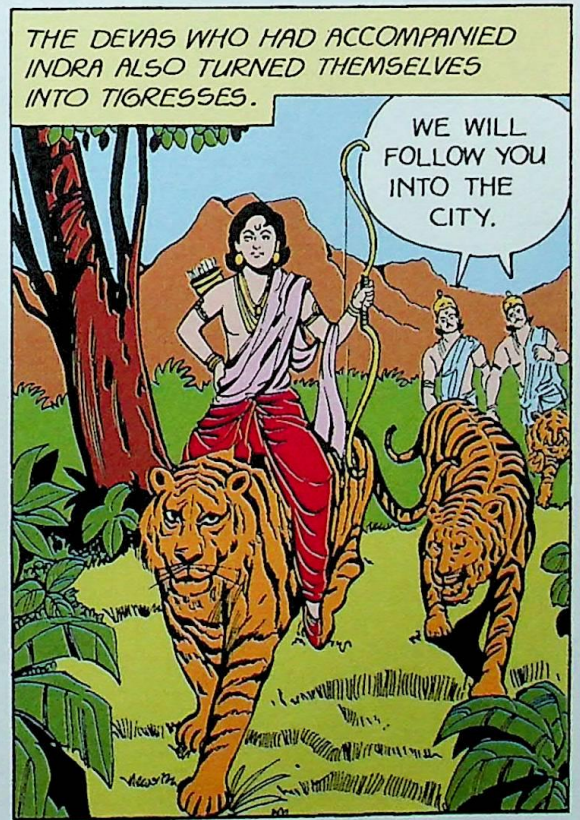
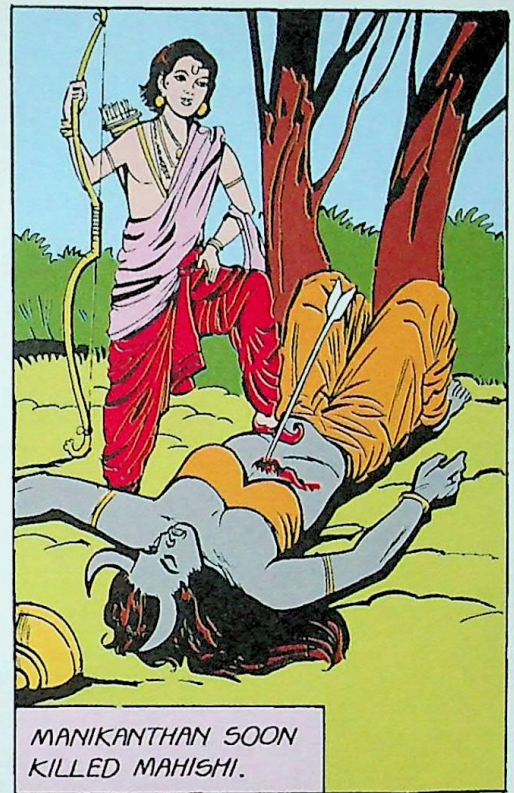
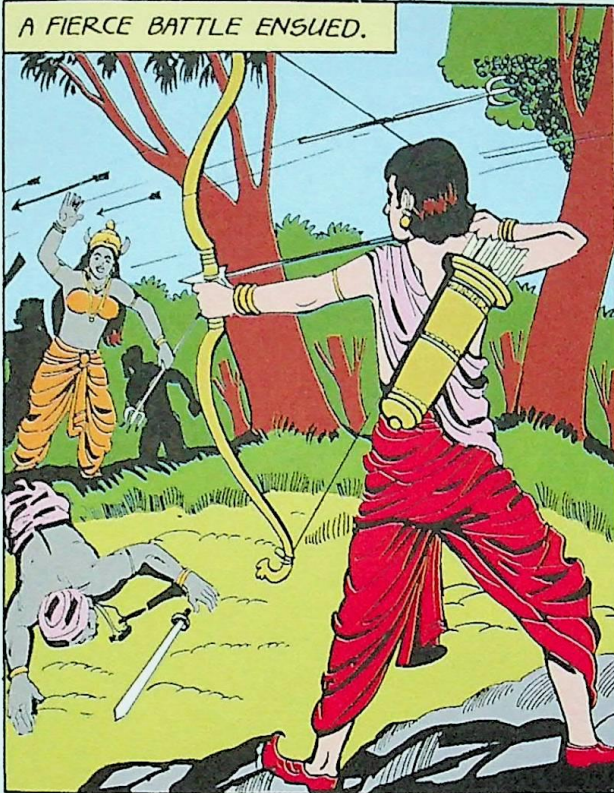


MAHISHI WENT UP TO MANIKANTHAN AND ATTACKED HIM.

COME, MAHISHI. MY EARTHLY MISSION IS ABOUT TO BE FULFILLED.







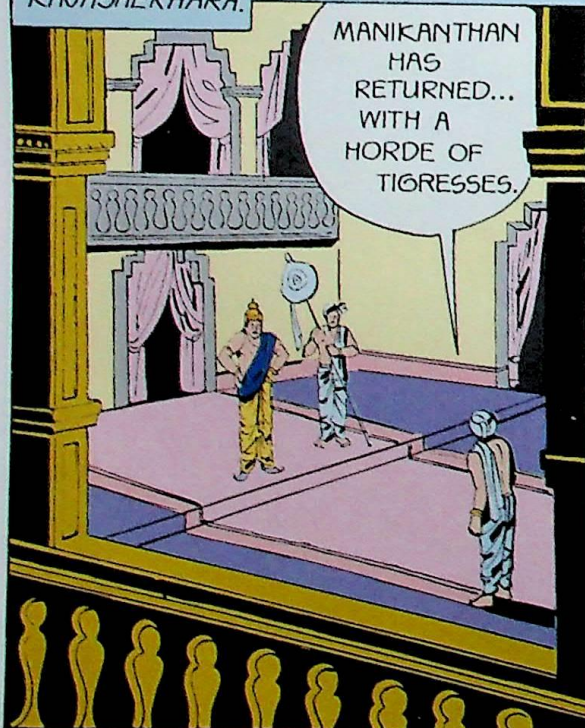


AS MANIKANTHAN RODE INTO THE CITY ON HIS TERRIFYING MOUNT FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY TERRIFYING RETINUE—



ONE OF THE CITIZENS RAN TO  
RAVASHEKHARA.

MANIKANTHAN  
HAS  
RETURNED...  
WITH A  
HORDE OF  
TIGRESSES.



THE KING, WHO RUSHED OUT TO  
SEE THIS UNUSUAL SIGHT, WAS  
STUNNED.

MANIKANTHAN  
IS TWELVE  
TODAY. TODAY  
I WILL KNOW  
WHO HE IS.



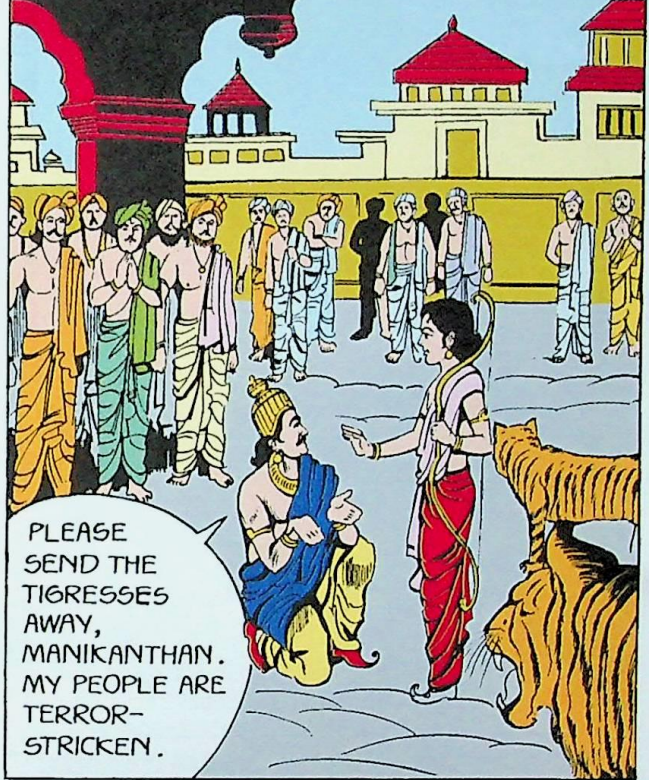


JUST THEN HE HEARD  
A DIVINE VOICE.

MANIKANTHAN  
IS NONE  
BUT GOD  
HIMSELF.



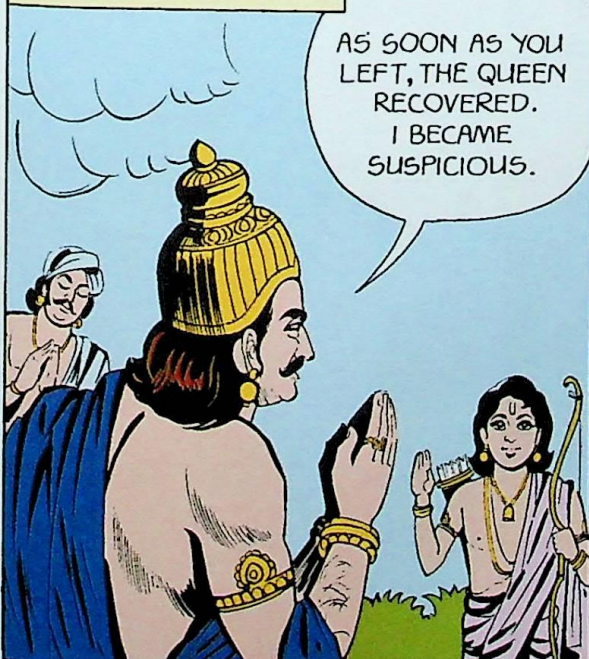
RAJASHEKHARA RAN FORWARD AND FELL AT  
MANIKANTHAN'S FEET.



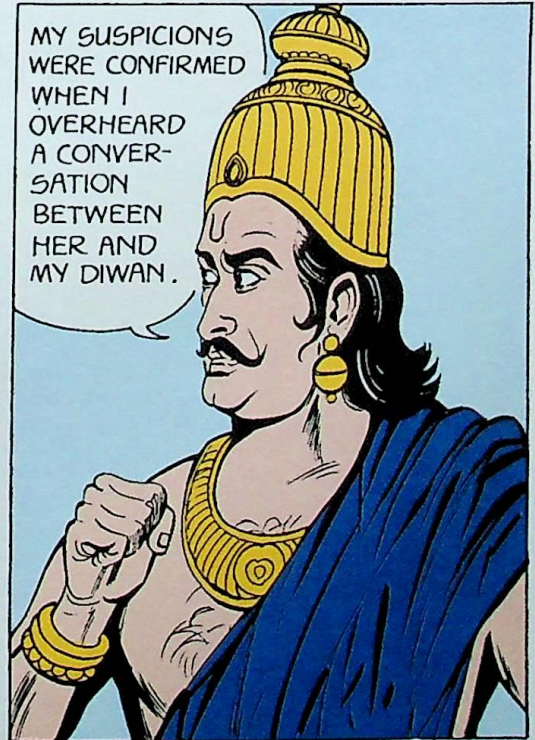
PLEASE  
SEND THE  
TIGRESSES  
AWAY,  
MANIKANTHAN.  
MY PEOPLE ARE  
TERROR-  
STRICKEN.

MANIKANTHAN SMILED, AND THE  
TIGRESSES VANISHED.

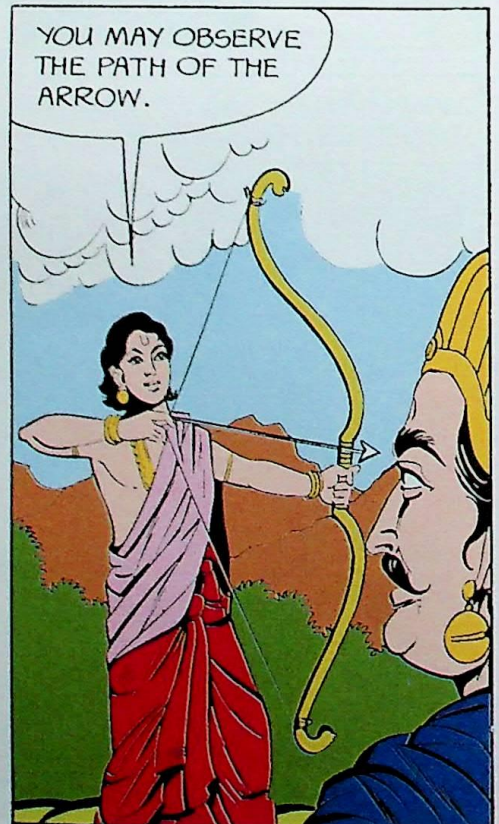
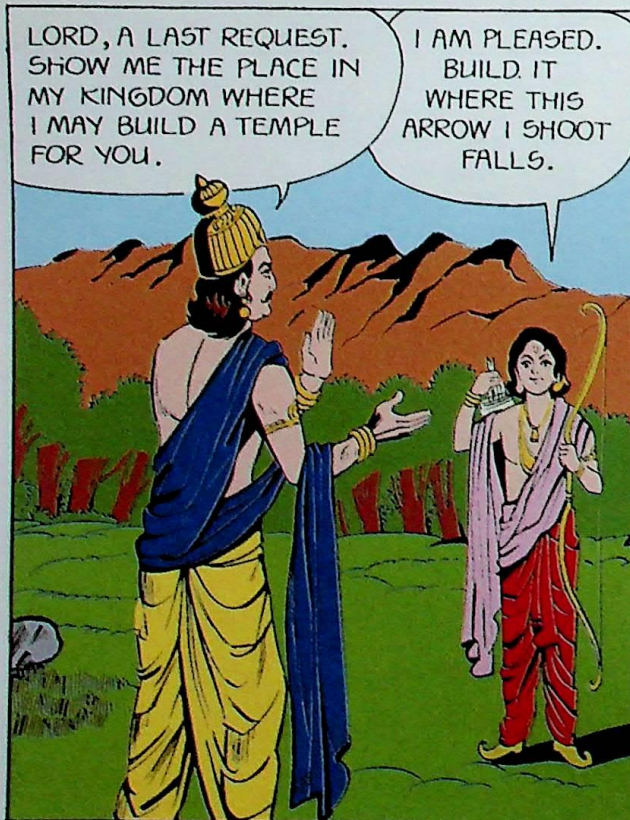
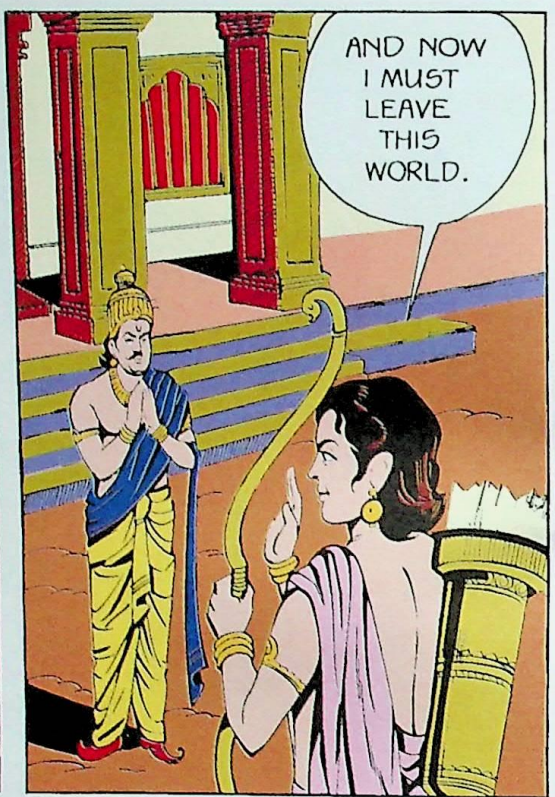
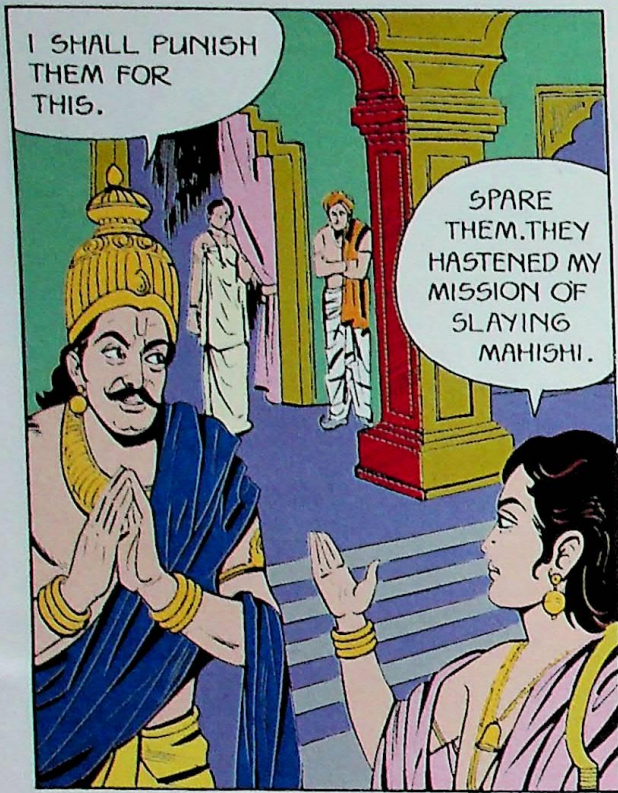
AS SOON AS YOU  
LEFT, THE QUEEN  
RECOVERED.  
I BECAME  
SUSPICIOUS.



MY SUSPICIONS  
WERE CONFIRMED  
WHEN I  
OVERHEARD  
A CONVER-  
SATION  
BETWEEN  
HER AND  
MY DIWAN.

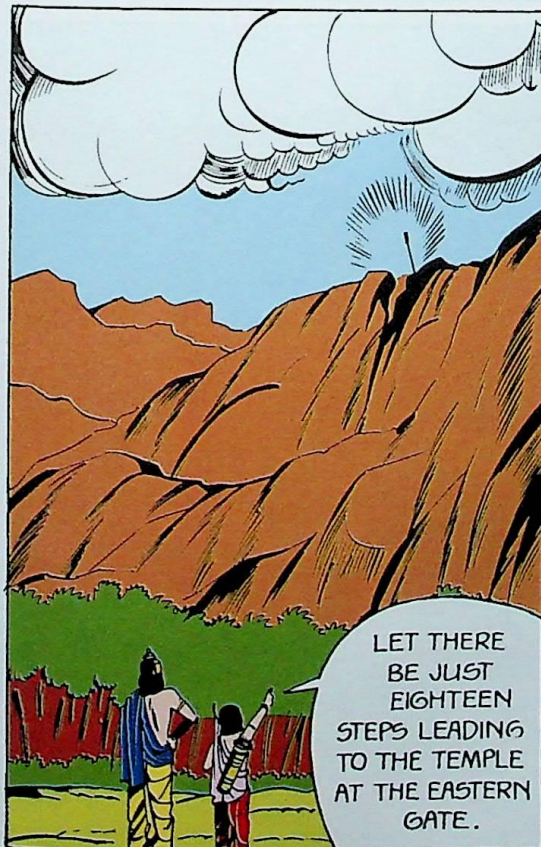
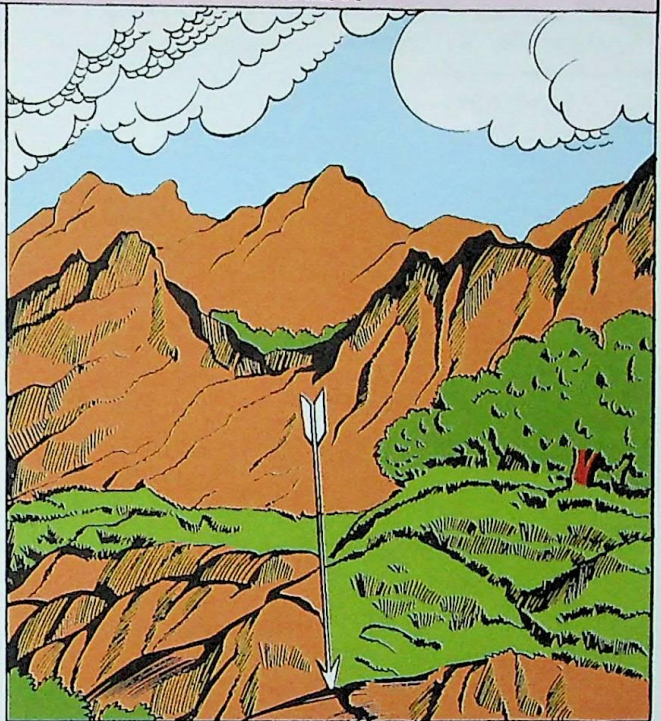
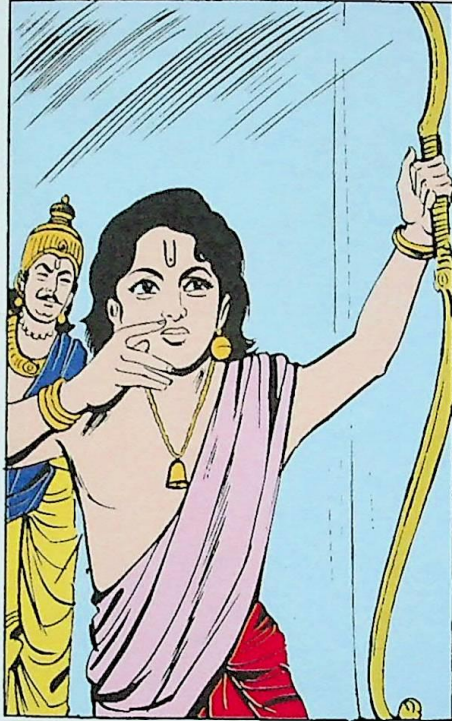








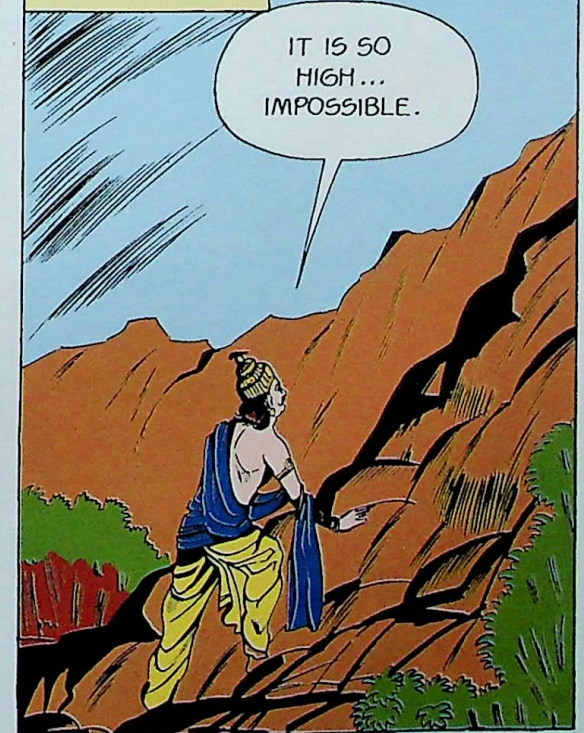
THE ARROW FELL AT THE SUMMIT OF THE SHABARI HILLS.



LET THERE  
BE JUST  
EIGHTEEN  
STEPS LEADING  
TO THE TEMPLE  
AT THE EASTERN  
GATE.

MANIKANTHAN VANISHED AND THE  
KING BEGAN HIS TREK TO THE  
MOUNTAIN TOP.

IT IS SO  
HIGH...  
IMPOSSIBLE.





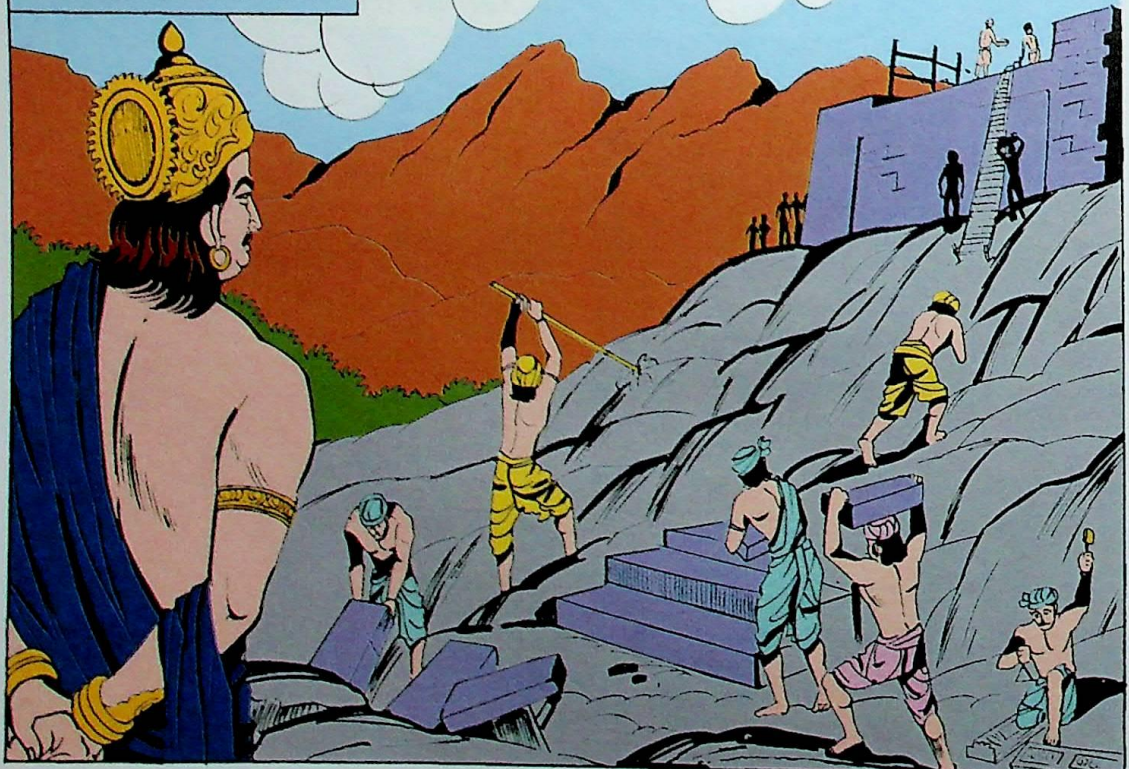
AT LAST RAJASHEKHARA REACHED THE  
TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN.

HOW WILL  
I EVER  
ACHIEVE  
MY TASK?

AS HE STOOD THERE, DAZED  
WONDERING WHERE TO BEGIN—

I SHALL SEND  
VISHWAKARMA  
TO HELP YOU  
OUT.

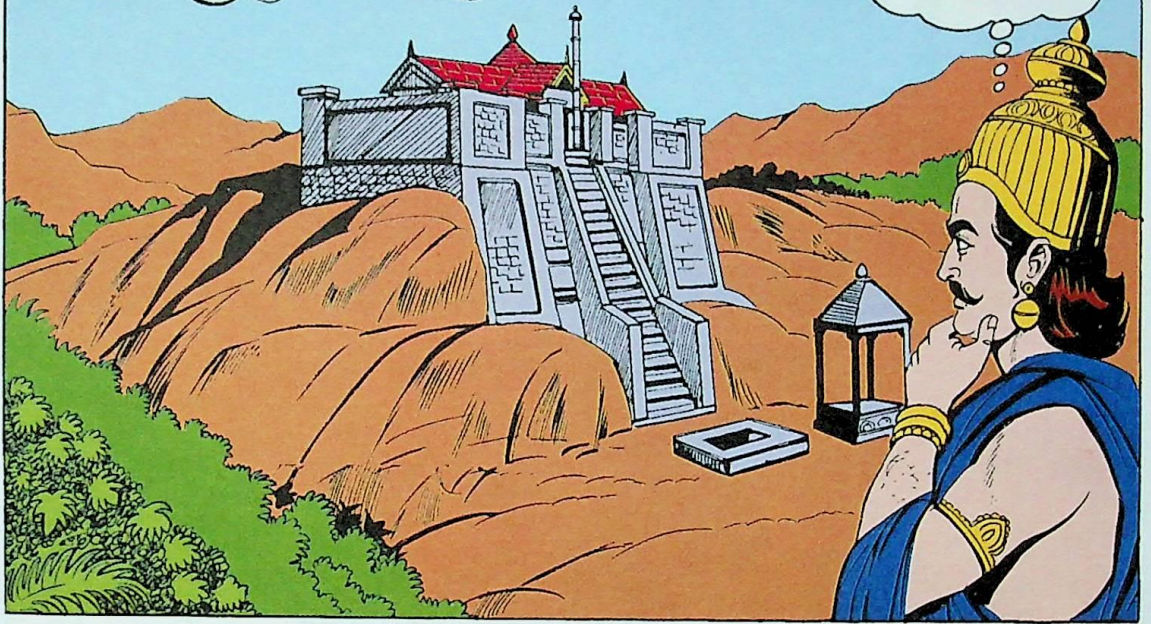
UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF VISHWAKARMA,  
THE DIVINE ARCHITECT...





...THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE WAS SOON COMPLETED.

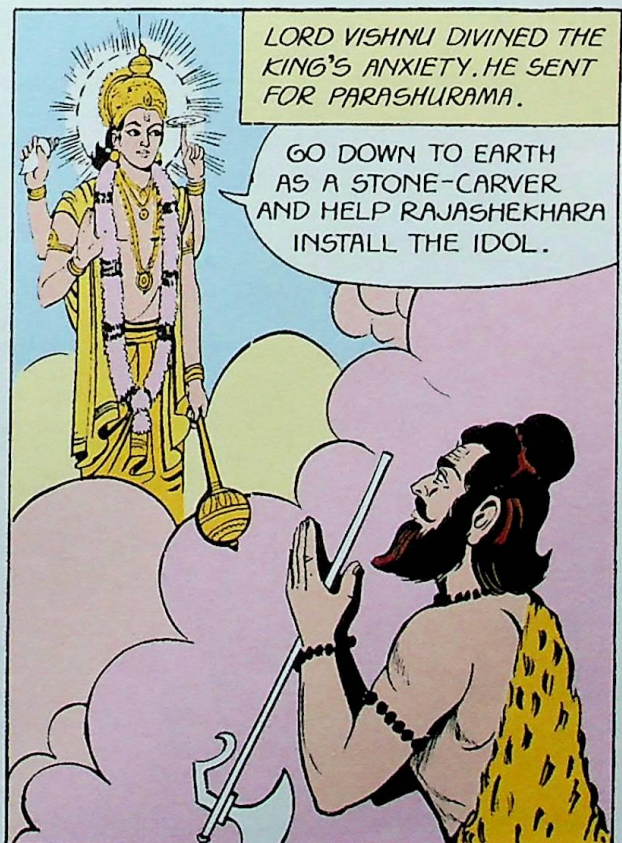
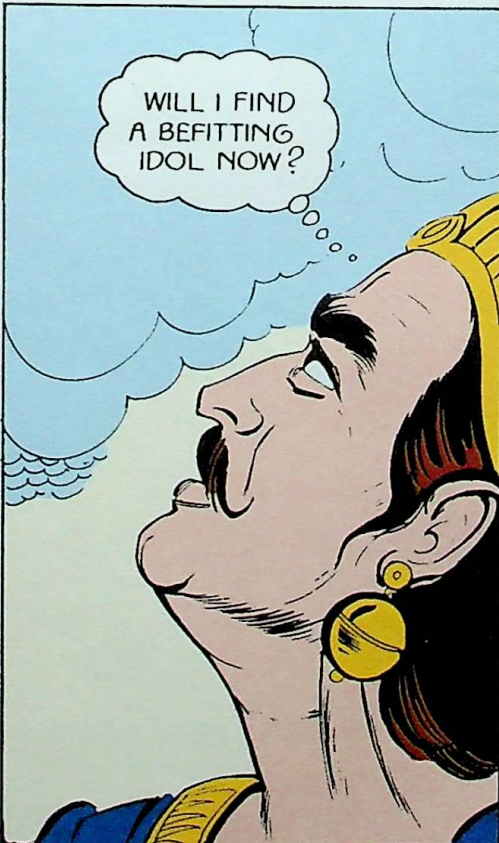
THROUGH THE LORD'S GRACE IT HAS RISEN - NOBLE AND IMPOSING.



WILL I FIND A BEFITTING IDOL NOW?

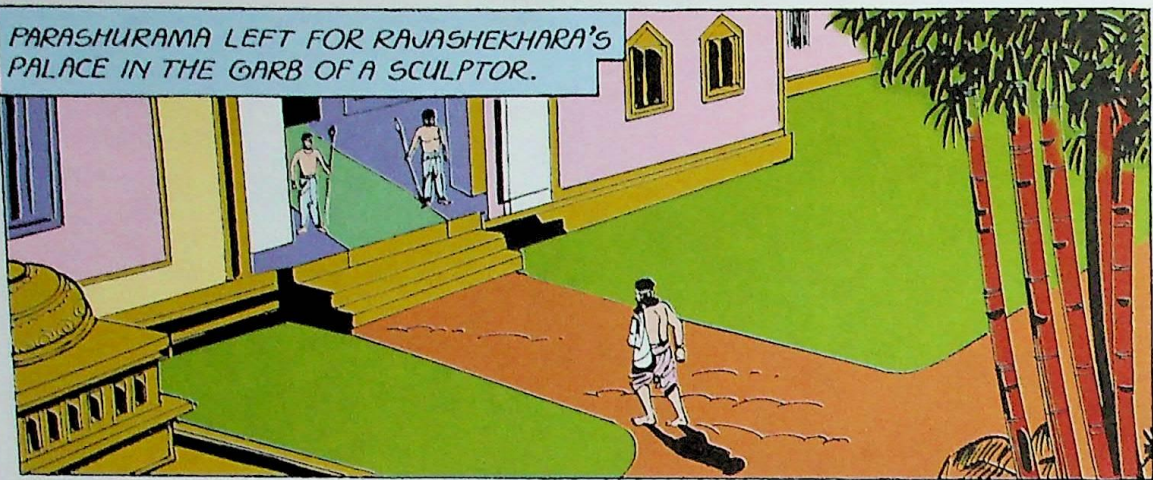
LORD VISHNU DIVINED THE KING'S ANXIETY. HE SENT FOR PARASHURAMA.

GO DOWN TO EARTH AS A STONE-CARVER AND HELP RAJASHEKHARA INSTALL THE IDOL.



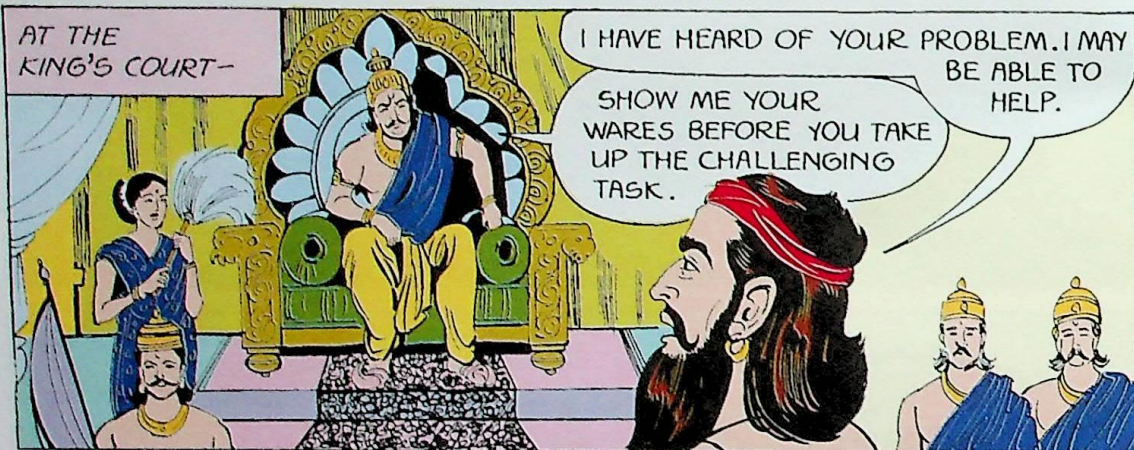


PARASHURAMA LEFT FOR RAJASHEKHARA'S PALACE IN THE GARB OF A SCULPTOR.



AT THE KING'S COURT—

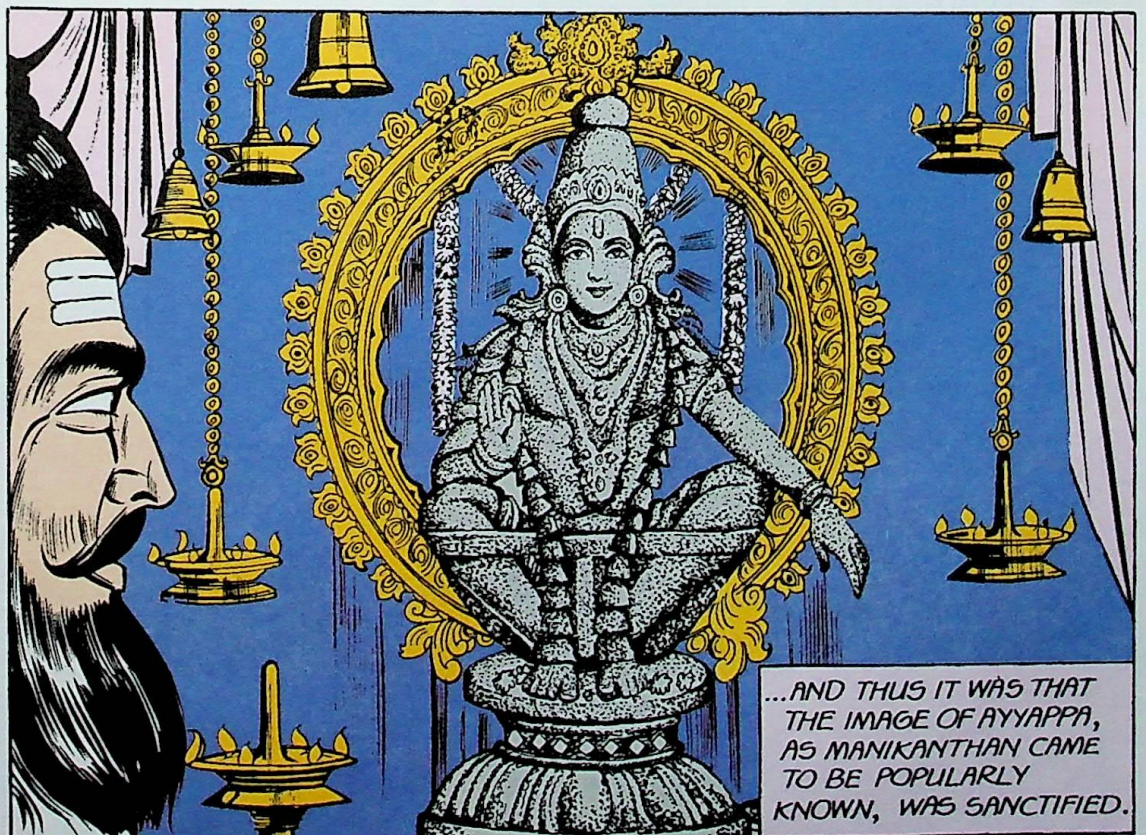
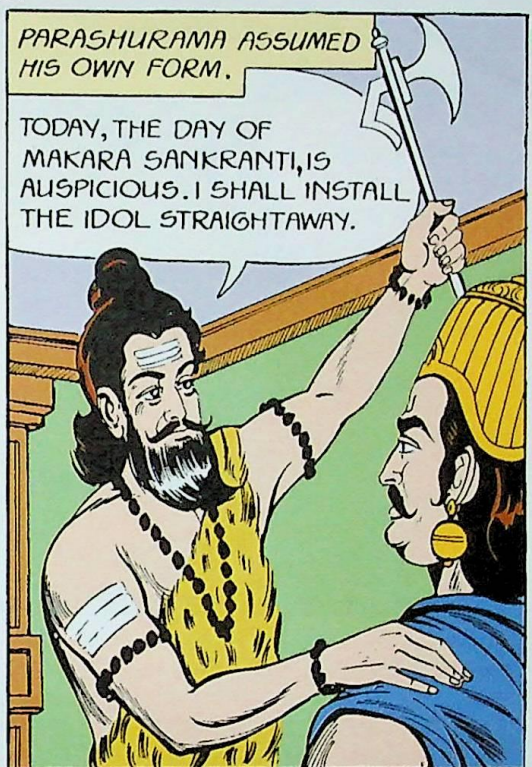
I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR PROBLEM. I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.  
SHOW ME YOUR WARES BEFORE YOU TAKE UP THE CHALLENGING TASK.



THEY ARE FLAW-LESS, EACH ONE OF THEM.









MEANWHILE THE WICKED DIWAN WAS AFFLICTED BY AN INCURABLE DISEASE.

I HAVE SINNED.  
WILL I EVER  
BE CLEANSED?



ONE NIGHT HE HAD A DREAM.

COME TO MY TEMPLE  
ON THE SHABARI HILL.  
BUT ENTER ONLY  
AFTER CLEANSING  
YOURSELF IN THE  
PAMPA.\*



THE DIWAN WASTED NO TIME. THE NEXT MORNING HE SET OUT FOR THE PAMPA.

I HAVE COME TO WASH  
AWAY MY SINS IN  
REMORSE, HOLY  
MOTHER. SAVE ME.



THE DIWAN CAME OUT OF THE WATER  
GLOWING WITH  
HEALTH -

I AM CLEANSED.  
THE HOLY MOTHER  
HAS BEEN  
MERCIFUL.



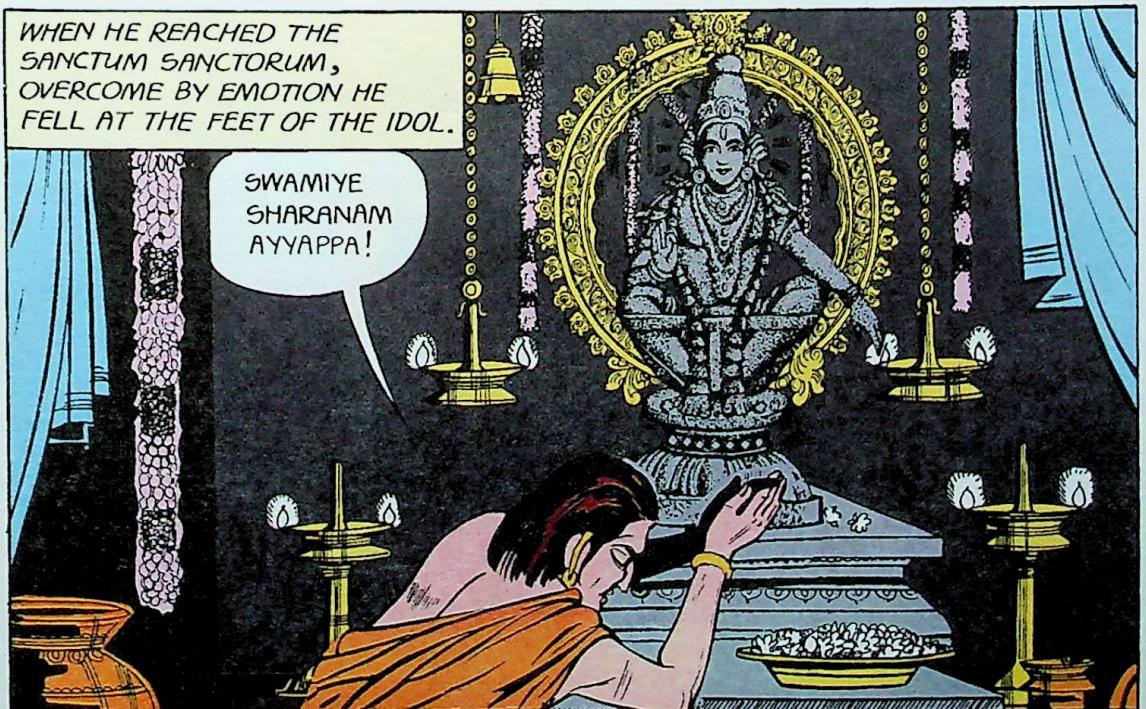
\* RIVER SAID TO BE ENLIVENED BY THE SPIRIT OF SHABARI, THE DEVOTEE OF 30



THEN WITHOUT PAUSING FOR BREATH HE RAN UP TO THE TEMPLE.



WHEN HE REACHED THE  
SANCTUM SANCTORUM,  
OVERCOME BY EMOTION HE  
FELL AT THE FEET OF THE IDOL.



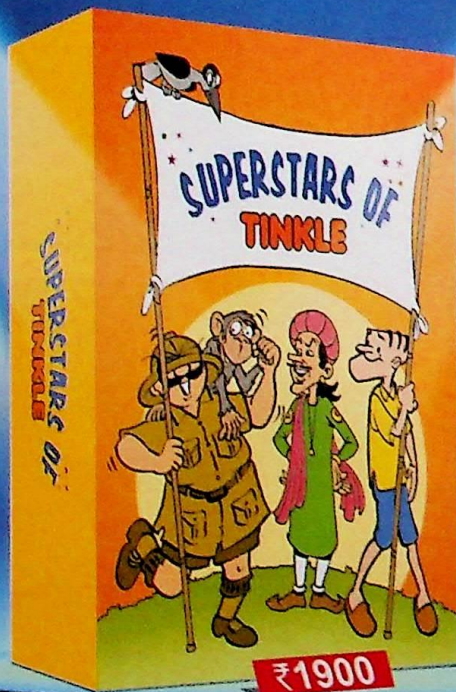
AND TO THIS DAY AS PILGRIMS MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE TEMPLE OF AYYAPPA,  
THEY CALL OUT 'SWAMIYE SHARANAM AYYAPPA:'



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